

## **Introduction: 2005 Comprehensive Plan for Early Literacy Success**

### **Background and Purpose of the Plan**

In 1997 Vermont's Equal Education Act (Act 60) called for the development of a "plan for establishing a comprehensive system of services for early education in the first three grades to ensure that all students learn to read by the end of third grade." Accordingly, such a plan was developed by a collaborative and representative team, and approved by the Vermont State Board of Education in January, 1998. Since that time, the plan served to guide the work of not only the Vermont Department of Education but also of several other partners (agencies and collaborating organizations) engaged in fostering early reading success.

The 1997 Equal Education Act also called for the plan to be updated every five years. Revisions were made in 1999 and also in 2004, and recently a decision was made to simplify and streamline the Plan, and bring it to the State Board of Education for consideration and approval. Our intent is to have the Plan serve as a map for action, an outline of feasible and essential steps and a tool for monitoring steps and strategies undertaken.

### **Composition of the Drafting Team; Development of the Plan**

Those involved in drafting the 2005 Comprehensive plan for Early Literacy Success have included representatives from the Vermont Department of Education, Stern Center for Language and Learning, Vermont READS Institute at University of Vermont, Vermont Department of Libraries, Vermont Center for the Book, University of Vermont, Vermont Humanities Council, Vermont Reading Recovery Consortia, Vermont Council on Reading, Head Start, Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center, public schools and others. These individuals are involved in a wide variety of early literacy efforts, and are knowledgeable about the broad range of current initiatives statewide, including, but not limited to; the Born To Read projects, National Writing Project in Vermont, Never Too Early projects, Vermont Reads Institute, and the Red Clover Program.

In order to achieve the goal that all children learn to read by the end of third grade, a comprehensive system of services must include not only the first three grades of school but also those preceding years, from birth through kindergarten. A review of research in early literacy and some recent national initiatives support this rationale.

The 2005 Plan is intended to be succinct and include actions that are both truly statewide and essential to reaching the goal of early reading success.

### **Contents of the Plan**

Four types of actions are included:

- standards and assessment
- learning opportunities and instruction
- professional development, and
- technical assistance.

Within *each* area, as appropriate and relevant, specific actions are listed for the following targeted audiences:

- Early care and education professionals (including those serving children from birth through third grade, administrators, and higher education faculty)
- Home, family and community

If the plan is successful, a greater percentage of students will meet the standard on both the Grade 2 Vermont Developmental Reading Assessment (VT-DRA) and the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP). The ultimate goal is for all Vermont children to become competent and confident readers.

## Comprehensive Plan for Early Literacy Success

	<b>School and Literacy Professionals</b> (Early Childhood Educators, Teachers, Administrators, & IHE Staff)	<b>Home, Family and Community</b>
<b>Standards &amp; Assessment</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue DRA and NECAP administration and analysis of data results</li> <li>2. Review, identify, and disseminate high quality assessments tied to the Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning through network meetings, alternate assessment trainings, etc.</li> <li>3. Expand use of the Vermont Early Learning Standards for preschool curriculum development and related assessments</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Provide optional GE training and resources for home school families and networks</li> <li>5. Disseminate <i>Parent Guide to Vermont Early Learning Standards</i>.</li> <li>6. Disseminate results of statewide early literacy gains to the broader Vermont community</li> </ol>
<b>Professional Development (PD)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Promote assessment to instruction linkages through GE networks and Vermont Early Learning Standards curriculum development trainings.</li> <li>8. Recommend ROPA review teams include individuals with literacy expertise</li> <li>9. Convene Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) faculty to review current research, assessments, and standards, and to recommend best practices for teacher prep programs and ROPA</li> <li>10. Equip regional partners with text and media resources.</li> <li>11. Continue statewide professional development, e.g., Reading First Academies, <i>Never Too Early</i>, <i>Building Blocks</i>, <i>VRI at UVM Summer Institute</i></li> <li>12. Use Early Childhood State Improvement Grant (SIG) to train new cohorts of early childhood educators</li> <li>13. Promote high quality PD for core, supplemental and intervention programs, e.g., <i>Time for Teachers</i>, <i>Reading Recover</i>.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Promote <i>Ready Set Go</i> training for entering Kindergarten parents, emphasis on lowest 25<sup>th</sup> percentile: VHC</li> <li>15. Promote Building Blocks (Stern Center) and Read With Me (VHC)</li> <li>16. Provide public and school librarians with training in early literacy theories and practice</li> <li>17. Support training to medical students and physicians regarding early reading e.g., Stern Center Med Ed CD, etc.</li> </ol>

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(Continued)

	<b>School and Literacy Professionals</b> (Early Childhood Educators, Teachers, Administrators, & IHE Staff)	<b>Home, Family and Community</b>
<b>Technical Assistance (TA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18. Support PD and TA that emphasizes links between student data related to performance and program adjustment</li> <li>19. Provide TA on grant preparation in literacy</li> <li>20. Promote programmatic assessment of early literacy quality/program design (Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. Develop survey for parents to identify a system(s) that would be useful in supporting emerging literacy</li> <li>22. Disseminate information about the Comprehensive Early Literacy Plan on the websites of participating agencies and partners.</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Opportunities &amp; Instruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>23. Continue financial support for the Red Clover Program</li> <li>24. Update and distribute Early Literacy Toolkits to Pre K-3 teachers, administrators, SPED teachers and Educational Services Agencies (ESA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25. Distribute Mother Goose Cards statewide</li> <li>26. Promote Vermont Academy of Pediatrics' <i>Reach Out and Read</i> program</li> <li>27. Disseminate/publicize materials that support transition to school, as well as the underserved population (e.g. <i>Off To Kindergarten Booklet</i>, Vermont ETV's <i>Ready To Learn</i>)</li> <li>28. Use the State-wide early literacy team to promote collaboration across literacy initiatives and organizations</li> </ul>

## **Glossary**

**BORN TO READ/REACH OUT & READ** – Pediatricians & family doctors distribute books & videos on reading to underserved families at the 6-month well-baby visit. Approximately 12,000 infants & toddlers are reached across Vermont

**BUILDING BLOCKS** – Stern Center Early Literacy Program

**EARLY LITERACY TEAM** – cross-agency team facilitates implementation of Vermont's Comprehensive Plan for Early Reading Success

**ESA** – Education Service Agency

**GE** – Grade Expectations linked to Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities

**GLE** – Grade Level Expectations linked to Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities

**IHE** – Institutions of Higher Education (colleges and universities)

**MOTHER GOOSE PROGRAM** – Training for parents and caregivers provided by the Vermont Center for the Book includes literacy cards for K-3 Vermont students and their families as a tool to help parents understand the stages of learning to read.

**NECAP** – New England Comprehensive Assessment Program

**READ WITH ME** – Vermont Humanities Council Early Literacy Program

**READING FIRST** – Program assists the Vermont Department of Education and Local Education Agencies to establish research-based, comprehensive reading programs for students in kindergarten through third grade.

**READING RECOVERY** – Highly effective short-term intervention of one-on-one tutoring for low-achieving first graders.

**READY, SET, GO** – Program for parents with children entering kindergarten sponsored by the Vermont Humanities Council.

**RED CLOVER PROGRAM** – Red Clover Award nominated books are distributed to Vermont K-4 to read and discuss. Students then vote on the books. This also includes an annual reading-and-discussion event in Vermont schools.

**ROPA** – Results-Oriented Program Approval: process to approve teacher preparation programs at IHEs in Vermont.

**SIG** – State Improvement Grant (federal grant)

**STERN CENTER** – The Stern Center for Language & Learning, Burlington, Vermont

**SPED** – Special Education

**TA** – Technical Assistance

**TIME FOR TEACHERS** – Stern Center program of research-based best practices in reading instruction.

**VHC** – Vermont Humanities Council

**VRI** – Vermont READS Institute at the University of Vermont. Programs involve professional development to improve reading achievement, spanning grades K-12.

**VSRI** – Vermont Strategic Reading Initiative is a project of the Vermont READS Institute at UVM and the Vermont Department of Education. Focuses on reading comprehension improvement across content areas in middle grades and secondary level.

**VT-DRA** – Vermont Developmental Reading Assessment: statewide assessment used at end of grade 2.